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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

30 CFR Parts 202, 206, and 211

RIN 1010-AC02

Amendments to Gas Valuation Regulations for Federal Leases

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.

ACTION: Extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: The Minerals Management Service (MMS) hereby gives notice that it is extending the public comment period for a document requesting comments on supplemental information which was published in the **Federal Register** on April 22, 1997, (62 FR 19536). In this document, MMS withdrew its proposed rulemaking to amend the regulations for valuing natural gas produced from Federal leases and requested comments on supplemental options for natural gas valuation.

In response to requests for additional time, MMS will extend the comment period from June 23, 1997, to July 23, 1997.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 23, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments or suggestions should be sent to the following addresses.

For comments sent via the U.S. Postal Service use: Minerals Management Service, Royalty Management Program, Rules and Publications Staff, P.O. Box 25165, MS 3021, Denver, Colorado 80225-0165.

For comments via courier or overnight delivery service use: Minerals Management Service, Royalty Management Program, Rules and Publications Staff, MS 3021, Building 85, Denver Federal Center, Room A-613, Denver, Colorado 80225-0165.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David S. Guzy, Chief, Rules and Publications Staff, phone (303) 231-3432, FAX (303) 231-3385 or (303) 231-3194, e-Mail David_Guzy@mms.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: MMS received requests from representatives of the oil and gas industry to extend the

comment period of this document. This time extension is in response to these requests in order to provide commentators with adequate time to provide detailed comments.

Dated: June 2, 1997.

Lucy Querques Denett,

Associate Director for Royalty Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

30 CFR Part 250

RIN 1010-AC17

Seismic Reassessment of California Outer Continental Shelf Platforms

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: MMS has developed proposed regulations for the seismic reassessment of offshore platforms. This proposed rule would only apply to platforms on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore the State of California. This proposed rule includes criteria for determining a platform's fitness through a structural analysis. Each platform on the California OCS would need to undergo a seismic assessment within 3 years of publication of the final rule. An analysis would also be triggered by damage to primary structural members, proposals to significantly increase loads, or other significant changes. Previously, MMS has allowed for good engineering judgment to determine how modifications or significant changes would affect a platform's structural integrity. This proposed rule will provide for more consistency in seismic reassessment analysis.

DATES: MMS will consider all comments received by August 11, 1997. We will begin reviewing comments then and may not fully consider comments we receive after August 11, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Mail or hand-carry written comments to the Department of the Interior; Minerals Management Service; 381 Elden Street; Mail Stop 4700; Herndon, Virginia 22070-4817; Attention: Rules Processing Team.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lawrence Ake, Engineering and Research Branch, at (703) 787-1567.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Platforms installed offshore Southern California prior to the 1970's were designed and constructed according to onshore codes used at the time of their installation. In

1969, the American Petroleum Institute (API) published a document entitled "Recommended Practice for Planning, Designing, and Constructing Fixed Offshore Platforms," or API RP 2A, containing guidelines developed specifically for offshore structures. The 7th edition of API RP 2A (1976) was the first version to include guidelines for seismic loading. The 19th edition of API RP 2A is currently incorporated into MMS regulations, although the latest 20th edition was published in July 1993.

Following the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, MMS and the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) began investigating seismic reassessment of structures located offshore Southern California. The agencies began to evaluate seismic analyses that had been performed for offshore platforms in their design phases. MMS decided to require operators of the oldest platforms, constructed before the 1976 API RP 2A 7th edition guidelines were in place, to conduct preliminary seismic analyses that are normally required for new platforms. The CSLC began a program to reassess platforms that were undergoing significant changes in operations, loads, or personnel. Experience with this process has shown the need for the development of uniform seismic design criteria.

Aware of growing MMS and CSLC interest in reassessment and the lack of credible reassessment criteria, the API funded an independent study in 1991 by a panel of four distinguished experts in matters related to seismic design. The results of the study were based on the underlying recommendation that the seismic risk offshore should be similar to that used for well-designed structures onshore. An API task group was formed to develop reassessment procedures and criteria for storm and ice loads as well as seismic loads. Its members were composed of technical experts from the offshore industry, academia, and the MMS.

Using the panel's study on seismic reassessment as a guide, the API task group developed a Supplement to the 20th edition of API RP 2A that covers all environmental loading conditions. It provides technical criteria to be used in reassessing existing structures. The criteria embrace a fitness-for-purpose evaluation coupled with the risk of structural failure and the consequences of that failure. The details of the Supplement will not be discussed here since it has already been the subject of several 1994 Offshore Technology Conference papers. The API finalized and published this Supplement